

Friday, 08. May 2015

Today we drove in a twelve-seater bus to Lama Gaun, a small sacred place about 40 km south of Kathmandu near the village Farping. Ganesh Disable New Life Center in Nepal had hired the bus for us. We were happy to be inside it because it was a bit more comfortable than the motorcycle. Before starting the journey we first went to BIR Hospital to pick up some medicines.

During the drive we passed through a number of collapsed or damaged houses, Thomas told me that some Nepalese now after the earthquake, would be very scared to live in multi-story building and the report also showed that many dead came mainly through the wreckage of higher houses. He suspects that in the future people in the valley will build a maximum of two-storey houses. It would be great to have more land here in Kathmandu valley, where the land is so fertile that one could cultivate 4 crops a year. Building many houses here in the valley would have a negative impact on their ability to supply the country with food.



The construction of houses on slopes is very difficult. For first it costs lots of money and time. Both are currently very limitedly available.

Thomas adds more that, one could build rather high buildings but they should be earthquake-proof. In addition, it should be the absolute focus, to improve the drinking water supply of the people.

Immediately upon our arrival at Lama Gaun to our surprise, the place turned out to be less than optimal for the installation of our first



Health Camp. The expected needy people and injured were not here, what we had already predicted after hearing it from the volunteers in BIR Hospital. They had suggested us several alternatives. Unfortunately we did not get approval for the other places.

We spread ourselves out on the terrace of a former medical supply building a Norwegian organization. The building was abandoned. It was built too close to a mountain and had



suffered through the recent significant water damage in monsoon. Through the windows of the closed building we could see the moldy walls.

A short time later we were greeted by the villagers. For the 3 doctors, tables and chairs were set up.



Chris performed blood pressure measurements while Kritan listed the name of patients. The patients were thoroughly examined by 3 doctors.

While the others were busy in the health camp, Thomas and I used the time for intensive discussions. He has a lot of

experience, through his long time in Nepal and so I got a crash course on the behavior of the Nepalese. In Nepal, as Thomas says delays are normal. The things might not work as you had planned earlier but at the end you manage to do it may be not in the right order or time but you do it.

The music that was coming from a wedding party struck into our ears, which was enough to cheer us up. Some of the invited guests in the wedding guests came to us and wanted to be examined. One of the ladies knew Dr. Jiwan and talked to him. Instead of the relief effort in a ruined village, we somehow managed to land amidst a fun wedding party. There was nobody who was seriously ill, but some of the men were a bit tipsy. But our suspension was that the really sick remained in the houses or were in the hospitals.





Tom from Salzburg presents himself to us. His brother is the bridegroom. Both he and the bride are involved socially in a club that has built a beautiful social surrounding. Tom himself is chairman of the Association Friends for Nepal in Salzburg. He was only a few steps away from starting an organized and financed the construction of a school and an orphanage on the club. He later invited us to come up later to celebrate the wedding party, so we could also get something to eat and to drink. Then I remembered again the words of Thomas, in Nepal there are often things different than you would expect.

During the Thomas and I expressed our interest to see the school he built. Spontaneously he showed us the organic garden, an interesting bamboo straw house with a simple slide in the thatched roof. After the earthquake they had lived there for a while. What people need now is a quick temporary solution regarding their accommodation before they could rebuild their houses. The sending of tarpaulins and tents is great, as it is being considered by most aid agencies, is too little, because the monsoon with its heavy rains would be more than enough to damage these tarpaulins. The bamboo-thatched homes with a simple slide could be a solution.



Tom still showed us the stable and the earthquake-proof school built by him that has survived the earthquake without damage.



In addition to the school there was an orphanage, in which half-orphans and children had found shelter from socially disadvantaged families. Both houses were built to a high standard.

Since no helping organization passed through the village, he and his wife had begun to reach out in the local area to individual families. They wrote down exactly what damage had been done to the houses and family and have made plans on how to help them.



After our approximately 2-hour discussion, we decided to set up a drinking water system PAUL here, because since the earthquake the residents have considerable problems with the drinking water. The bride, Dayan was from Finland, a few days earlier she probably got ill by drinking contaminated water. Later in future we will also plan to build biosand filter in some some scattered families around.

After the health camp, rest of the team climbed up the hill to eat the lunch in the wedding party. In the camp total of 39 people were tested. Some of them had high blood pressure and others had minor complains. If we had announced about the health camp in advance, we would definitely have had many patients.



At dinner, we discussed with the bride's aunt Dayan and uncle Suresh, the about the reconstruction of the destroyed houses. Both are teachers and Suresh is additionally volunteer for the club. Dayan, a professional designer who has created a number of good and fair-paying jobs in their sewing, confirmed the importance of creating jobs for the people here.



Installing BioSandFilters would also create jobs, because the biosand have to be produced, transported, installed and put into operation. It also needs to be planned and managed. For example, the donors like to get the feedbacks, they'd want to know where the donated biosand were erected. There must be someone to take care of and reviewing the established biosand and instruct people in the handling and cleaning. We agree to start the biosand project as soon as possible.

Tom told us that he had already started with the repair of the building of Norwegian aid organization, where we had our health camp. The mud behind the house was already so far removed that it would not flood again in the next monsoon. But he said he still lacks a physician who regularly would examine and treat the villagers. Thomas and Shavitri proposed that Dr. Jiwan and Dr. Rajan could fit this in their schedule and pay a regular visit here.



We all were very happy, because after the sluggish start to the day we had finally achieved something tangible, which will continue even in the long term. Meanwhile, I think Kritan and I would think about to build up a mobile laboratory in order to diagnose infectious diseases quickly. Thomas's idea is to build 5 to 10 such medical center with mobile diagnostics at different places where each resident doctor would visit at least one day a week.

Some time ago, Tom collected huge money from his friends over his Facebook, the amazing sum of around EUR 1, 00,000 in donations. He now wants to develop kits for a small expandable house module, so that the people themselves could build a house and if necessary could expand later. He estimated about 1000 Euros per kit. With the money from his friends, he now plans the construction of about 100 houses.

We liked the place and would be nice to stay a little longer. We would have talked about the cultivation of organic vegetables and many other things. But as the wedding party was still in full swing and Tom also looked busy

there, we said goodbye and promised to each other that we would work closely from now and will support each other.

Translator: Kritan

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